

LINK WITH THE OLD WORLD

(The following article, which was first published in a newspaper in Plymouth, England, in 1965, tells of Devon's imperishable link with the new world. It was written by Arthur Wilde, who visited Plymouth and recalls the man who led the gallant band of Pilgrims on an expedition which started a new world. -- Ed.)

Standing on the Mayflower Stone at Plymouth, and looking towards The Sound and the country beyond, I realised how the title of the song, "Glorious Devon," could be truthfully applied to Devon's outstanding maritime story--There, on the historic Barbican, the city's oldest quarter, under the bold ramparts of the Citadel, with the statue of Sir Francis Drake on the Hoe above, I felt I was turning the pages of our colourful history in which other heroes of this country have figured so nobly--Raleigh, Gilbert, Hawkins, Grenville and Frobisher.

Naturally, my thoughts as a Lancashire man were closely concerned with Captain Miles Standish, the military leader of the band of Puritans known to posterity as the Pilgrim Fathers. He has been immortalised in the literature of America by two of her greatest poets - Longfellow and Lowell. Standish proved himself a man of strong leadership and outstanding capacity and merit. Without him the attempt to establish the Pilgrims' Colony would have been a disastrous failure.

Miles Standish, born in 1583, belonged to an old Lancashire family which had been established for generations at Standish Hall, near Wigan; also at Duxbury Hall not far away. The leaders of the expedition were William Bradford, from Yorkshire; John Carver, from Nottinghamshire; William Brewster, also from Nottinghamshire; and Miles Standish. As I recall these names I feel very proud indeed to be an Englishman, because these men were regarded as the pioneers of American Colonisation. A visit to the beautiful old church at Standish provides evidence of the family's importance. A fine

window in the Standish Chapel commemorates the saving of the life of King Richard II when threatened by Wat Tyler in the year 1381; and Ralph Standish, Squire-at-Arms to the Kings, is seen piercing the body of the rebel with his sword. Here, the pew-ends bear the family arms, and the burial vault is under the church.

Such is a brief outline of the Standishes. What about Miles himself? The example set him by his ancestors; the valiant deeds of English soldiers in foreign lands, particularly in Holland; and the thrilling adventures of Drake and his companions--all these inspired him in his youth. He was an army lieutenant at the age of eighteen.

Apart from his military service, however, very little is known about him up to the time he sailed in the Mayflower; but from that moment his stature certainly grows. The Puritans were also traders, under the London and Plymouth Companies, and they had withdrawn from the Established Church in their aim "to secure greater purity of doctrine, holiness of living and stricter discipline."

In two ships, the Speedwell,

of 80 tons, and the Mayflowers, of 180 tons, the Puritans set off from Southampton, but as the Speedwell sprang a leak the two ships had to put into Plymouth. On September 6, 1620, the Mayflower sailed alone from Plymouth with 74 men and 28 women. Why did the Puritans, who were not explorers like Drake and Raleigh, leave their native shores?

It was mainly because they sought religious freedom, which they did not possess under King James I. They had previously formed a Puritan Colony at Leyden, in Holland. In the Mayflower were 36 persons from Leyden and 66 from London, all of whom, of course, desired to retain their allegiance to the crown of England, and to keep liberty of conscience, as well. Surviving a raging gale, the gallant Mayflower, after nine weeks, reached Cape Cod, where the Puritans spent a month in deciding where they should land.

THEIR OWN CODE

I often think of these God-fearing men and women discussing their prospects, and drawing up their own code of laws, described as "the body politic for the future government of their state." Foremost among these laws was one which required every man, woman and child to be "a Church-goer." On Christmas Day they sailed

(Continued on Page 4)

DUXBURY CLIPPER

Thursday, September 23, 1965

LINK WITH
(Continued from Page 2)

into New Plymouth, and the day of their landing, known as "Forefathers' Day," is still celebrated in the U.S.A.

Before them was the wild-looking coast-line, with its seemingly inhospitable hinterland, and with many unseen dangers to be faced. How they must have toiled to build that first settlements, with its houses of wood and also their defences against the Indians. During that first winter many died from exposure, including Rose, the wife of Miles Standish. (His second wife, Barbara, arrived from England in 1623). The Pilgrims, however, persevered, tilled the soil, reared their cattle, and erected their first church. (One record states that, in their first winter, illness carried off half of the settlers).

As their military leader, Miles Standish proved himself to be well fitted to face the test of those critical years. With the Indians he was a model of pa-

tience, and he learned to speak their language. In the town of New Plymouth is the stone upon which the Puritans first set foot in America, which is known as the Plymouth Rock. I have read that the Puritan relics in the museum include the Bible which went out with them, and the log of the Mayflower, which was presented to the United States by the people of England.

DUXBURY

A few miles from New Plymouth is Duxbury, founded by Miles Standish in 1632, and named after Duxbury, his old family home near Standish in Lancashire. He became known as the "Captain of Plymouth;" and on Captain's Hill in Duxbury stands a noble monument which the people of America erected in 1872 as a token of

their appreciation of the man who had contributed so much in laying the firm foundation of their great country.

That monument in Duxbury, which took two years to build, is of stone, 110 ft. high, set on a granite base of 50 ft. (160 ft. in all); and on the top is a bronze statue of Miles Standish in full uniform nearly three times as large as life-size. (The Nelson monument in Trafalgar square is 145 ft. high). And nearby is a rock of peculiar shape, which is known as the Captain's Chair.

MEMORABLE MEETING

Miles Standish died at Duxbury, Massachusetts, on the 3rd October, 1656; and his grave is near his monument. During the

(Continued on Page 23)

LINK WITH
(Continued from Page 4)

war, on Plymouth's Barbican, I actually spoke to an American soldier, who told me he was a native of Duxbury. I regarded this meeting as a pleasant coincidence, in view of our mutual interest in the Pilgrim Fathers.

In Chorley parish church, near Duxbury, the American flag hangs over the Standish family pew. American Forces were stationed in this area during the war, and the vicar told the army commander to look upon the church as their very own for their Thanksgiving Day services.

In the Wigan Public Library is a fine painting showing Captain Miles Standish leading a number of friendly Indians in the form of a procession--a really nice peaceful scene.